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JEAN FRANÇOIS MARMONTEL

HIS LIFE AND WORKS AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY

by

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O U T L I N E

INTRODUCTION

About two years ago, a friend of mine, who knew of my interest in the French language and literature, handed me one day a very old-looking copy of a French book. It was paper covered, as are all French books, but in good condition. On examination, it proved to have been published in Paris by Le Dentu in 1816. The print was very clear and the woodcuts exquisite. It had evidently never been read as most of the pages were still uncut. The title of the book was Bélisaire. Both the book and the author, Marmontel, were new to me. I determined to read it and became interested in knowing more about the author.

The material found was limited to Marmontel's most important works and a volume[1] of detailed study of Marmontel, with criticism favorable to him. The histories of French literature[2] devoted little space to him and classed him as an upstart of mediocre ability. There was no account of his life except from his memoirs; J.M. Quérard in his La France Littéraire was the only one who had attempted any classification of his works and little glory was allotted to him among the greater men of the eighteenth century. The material, except for the Memoirs, Belisarius and the Moral Tales, was in French.

[1] S. Lenal, Un Homme de lettres au XVIIIe Siècle.
[2] Lanson, Petit de Julleville.

My attempt has been to put the material on Marmontel into a more concise form, and it is with this purpose in mind that I submit this thesis which consists of:

1. A biography of Marmontel based on his Memoirs.[3]
2. His literary work.
3. Marmontel and the philosophers of the eighteenth century.
4. A classification and the titles of all the writings of Marmontel, both major and minor.

[3] S. Lenal, Un Homme de lettres au XVIIIe Siècle.

B I O G R A P H Y O F M A R M O N T E L

JEAN FRANÇOIS MARMONTEL

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I

Biography

It is refreshing to turn from the reflection on the eccentricities, skepticism and complexities of soul of such well-known and much discussed personalities as Rousseau, Diderot and Voltaire, who held the centre of the stage in the eighteenth century, to one who, although he enjoyed considerable reputation in his day, all critics agree is a mediocrity and hence to-day is allotted small space among the great contributors to that century.

In Jean François Marmontel we become acquainted with a man, simple of soul, of a natural kindliness, an optimistic faith in the goodness of humanity and a Supreme Being, but with all, a man of practical and sane judgment. He led a life that was perfectly normal and developed a philosophy which was without the bitterness and fury that we associate with protests of existing conditions, a philosophy which is just as far-reaching to-day on the lives of every-day, normal individuals. Despite the fact that there are "No great wits without a grain of madness," mediocrity too has its reward.

The little town of Dort, lying in a peaceful valley of the Dordogne, is the birth-place of Jean François Marmontel

who was born there July 11, 1723. Here where inequality of birth and fortune were scarcely felt, Marmontel spent his childhood amidst a family circle comprised of, besides his parents and his brothers and sisters,[1] two great-grandmothers, a grandmother and her three sisters and an aunt. The property on which they subsisted was not large, to be true; but order, labor, a little trade and frugality kept them above want. The products of the garden and orchard with the harvest of the little farm were converted by these virtuous and industrious women into meals that were truly feasts. No doubt Marmontel owed his epicurean tastes to these early repasts since he alludes so frequently to the enjoyment of foods which he has partaken of.

Marmontel's father was by trade a tailor, a silent, reserved man, who beneath a stern exterior, was full of the tenderest affection, loving his wife to adoration. For him, Marmontel has preserved a respectful memory. His mother was the most worthy of women who, with naught but the simple education received at the little convent at Bort, "had acquired so much polish of mind with such elevation of soul, and, particularly in her language and style, a feeling of propriety so just, so delicate, so refined that it appeared in her to be the pure instinct of taste."[2] She was Marmontel's supreme law, guiding him with her tender affection and good

[1]There were 6 children, 4 boys and 2 girls. Lenal,Chap.I,p.19.
[2]Marmontel, Memoirs.

sense until the end of her days.

Marmontel first learned to read in the convent of the nuns. From there, he passed to the school of a village priest and at the age of eleven was thought to be sufficiently advanced to be admitted to the fourth class at the Collège de Mauriac, a Jesuit college near Bort. There was little money to be spent on education and his father considered it wiser for his son to learn some useful trade than to waste time on an uncertain profession adding, as so many do, that, "Latin was useless and only made sluggards." But pressed by his wife, who was passionately desirous that her first-born should receive a classical education, he yielded.

As Marmontel set out with his father, after receiving the caresses, tears and benedictions of his family, he was full of a joy that became short-lived when his father told him that unless he were admitted to the fourth class he would bring him back home again. The examination that Marmontel had to take from Father Malosse proved far from satisfactory but Marmontel, almost frantic with his own disappointment and picturing particularly the grief of his mother, pleaded with tears to be admitted and kind Father Malosse, much affected, reported to his father that his son had been admitted and that all would be well.

His father left him with his week's provisions consisting of a "large loaf of rye bread, a little cheese, a piece

of bacon, two or three pounds of beef and a dozen apples."[3] He was lodged with five other scholars at a mechanic's home and the mistress cooked and cared for each of them for about ten francs a year. No better spirit could be found than in the college of Mauriac. Laziness and lack of discipline were unknown. Work was regarded, if not a pleasure, at least a duty and a need. Their fellow students were their monitors and censors who, by the authority of age or talent, put order and rule into their studies and manners. The younger learned too from their elders to take care of their clothes, books, and provisions. Any delicacies sent by a family were regarded as a common treat to be shared by all alike. Healthy recreations were indulged in according to seasons. The spirit of religion was carefully maintained, with the obligation of each youth to go to confession.

His holidays at Christmas and Easter were passed with his parents without any other diversion than that afforded by the duties of kindness and affection. Marmontel, try as he would, could never get inured to the cold weather. At Mauriac, even in the severest cold, he found no fire except a few half-burnt billets, on his return to the lodging, and this he was scarcely allowed to approach. In the evening, when studying, the lamp afforded the only flame to warm his benumbed fingers. So, to find himself at home, in a good

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[3] Marmontel, Memoirs.

bed or by the corner of a good fire, were delicious moments whose enjoyment luxury would never have taught him.

During the first half-year, there was neither amusement nor relaxation for Marmontel. His extra time was spent in private instruction with Father Malosse to enable him to overtake his fellow students. Father Malosse spared him the humiliation of calling on him in the lecture room during this period. The love with which Marmontel speaks of his teachers is well-justified. After six months of strenuous application, Marmontel gradually became one of the best scholars as well as the happiest, for he loved his task. There was one boy named Amalvy in a class above him, whom Marmontel chose as his hero and model. He envied him, but without malignity, and his ambition was to equal him. Amalvy, according to Marmontel's description, seems to have had all the excellencies of mind and heart united to render him almost perfect, an example truly worthy of emulation. Amalvy was extremely popular and Marmontel whose nature craved good fellowship and popularity, seized what opportunity came to become so too. Such was the occasion when in the third class, he became the head of the class, which carried with it the dignity of being censor. Taking an example from the Romans, who gained the favor of the multitudes by public shows, Marmontel permitted the Auvergnian dance by a skillful fellow-student in the middle of the school-room to the

delight of all present. But the iron-capped wooden shoes of the dancer resounding on the stone slabs promptly called the masters there. Everyone presenting the atmosphere of deeply engrossed study, the master, finding no one to punish, made Marmontel suffer the pains of the guilty by extra tasks. Marmontel submitted without complaints and became the hero and martyr of the class.

Another incident covered him with not less glory. It happened the last year of college, a month before the end of the rhetoric course. The clock in the tower of the Benedictines was under repair. Several boys of the rhetoric class, curious to see its mechanism, went up to the tower. When the clock refused to go, the clock-maker accused the boys of having deranged the massive wheels of iron and complained to the head master. The boys were all ranged around the wall and successively flogged. When Marmontel was called to the chamber, he admitted that he had been of the number but protested his innocence along with the others. The head master,paying no attention returned to the flogging. Marmontel seized the opportunity and escaped to the school room of his class, where in an exordium which proved that he was the best pupil in rhetoric and had imbibed the inspired oratory of the Romans, he exhorted his comrades to protest the honor of the rhetoric class and to refuse to submit to the authority of Father Bis any longer. The pupils were carried away with

the force of the speech and especially with the argument of "no more rhetoric." An oath was taken and a Te Deum sung while they waited for the arrival of the master, head master and provost. All efforts on the part of these officials were useless to retain the pupils and thus Marmontel's rhetoric came to an end. He was now fifteen years old.

The time during the prolonged holidays this year was spent in walks with an old country curate, who exercised him in speaking Latin, an accomplishment which was to be immensely valuable to him in his later studies.

His father, who had just returned from Clermont, now announced his intention of taking Marmontel there, not to pursue courses in philosophy but to learn a trade. His mother tried with all the force of affection, grief and tears to dissuade him from this resolution but in vain. Marmontel was not averse to learning a trade and becoming self-supporting in a few years. However, knowing so well his mother's ambition for him, he resolved to satisfy both parents by reserving an hour and a half of his time morning and evening for the continuance of his studies. But the merchant would hear of no such composition in his counting-room and told Marmontel he could take it or leave it. Marmontel did the latter. What anguish he suffered after this decision, not because of the consequences to himself,

but because of having acted contrary to his father's will and because of the grief and vexation he should cause his mother! As he wandered about in his agitation, he saw a church and entered it. As he prayed, an inspiration came to him -- he would become a priest. His father and mother would both be reconciled to that and he himself felt such a sincere sentiment for his new vocation, as though Providence had indeed guided him to that purpose. With this overwhelming burden off his shoulders, he hired a poor garret with his slender resources and partook of a frugal supper. Then he wrote a letter each to his father and mother, different in contents one may be sure, and soon received the reply that each had been persuaded.

Marmontel had the intention to continue his studies at the Jesuit college at Clermont and at the same time earn his own living by private tutoring. To be admitted to undertake this, required that he should gain the confidence of the masters and make a name for himself. Marmontel showed himself shrewd and full of resources. Armed with the testimonies of his masters at Mauriac, he made no use of them at first, knowing that verbal praise makes but a vague impression. Instead, he wanted them to learn through examining him that he was qualified to enter the philosophy class. Needless to say, he surprised the head-master with his ability to translate, compose and write in verse and at the

end produced his testimonies. He entreated the head-master to put him on the list of private tutors and furnish him with scholars. The master, though visibly favorable to him, gave but a feeble promise on account of his youth. Meanwhile, Marmontel entered the class in logic. Weeks passed and he received no word from the head-master and his needs became less and less those suited to his healthy fifteen-year-old appetite. A good tenant of the same house noticed him and learned his story. As he mentioned the Jesuits she became scornful and recommended to him to seek out the Oratorians instead. She was a Jansenist, who detested the Jesuits and would wish to see them annihilated. The next day, having learned all about the animosity between the Jesuits and the Oratorians, he presented himself before the head-master and told him of his resolution to go to the Oratory. It had the desired effect. No Jansenist should convert a prospective Jesuit priest to their fold, and from then on, Marmontel had a school with enough scholars to provide for all his wants. His abbé's dress along with his desire of personal consideration, perhaps too, that good fortune that seemed to follow Marmontel all his life, produced happy results.

Marmontel returned the second year to the study of philosophy. This more difficult study along with an increased school, brought a strenuous year in which even his hours of

sleep had to be considerably shortened. It was on the same day that he had finished his course so successfully, amid the felicitations of his friends, that he received the cruel news of his father's death. This death was only one of the first which was to rob him, one after the other, of every member of his family, all victims of tuberculosis. That Marmontel himself escaped and lived to a ripe old age was perhaps due to an additional strength of a first-born and the fact that he had left home so early.

Nature seems to supply people with reserve force in extreme misery and Marmontel, upon opening his mother's door in the dead of night, felt a superior force as these helpless children and old women stretched out their arms to him. Without weakness and without tears, he encouraged them and promised henceforth to take the place of the father whom they had lost. The rhetorical speech was by no means a self-denial that would make him appear in the rôle of a hero, but sprang from the sincerity of his soul.

So moved was John Stuart Mill,[4] the philosopher, upon reading of Marmontel's strength of will and unselfish devotion to others, that he was completely cured of the mental obsession that was making life intolerable to him. The idea had possessed him that all sentiment was dead within him. But the unexpected tears which welled to his

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[4]John Stuart Mill, Mes Mémoires, Lenal, Chapter I, p. 37.

eyes, as he read Marmontel's memoirs lifted the weight from his soul, for he knew that he still possessed the spark of feeling which takes for its aim in life, "not happiness but some end foreign to happiness."

The concentrated grief and responsibility of a seventeen year old youth was in danger of having fatal consequences. On the physician's advice, his mother persuaded Marmontel to spend some time with the friendly old curate who had given him lessons during his vacations and who had a curacy at St. Bonet. She gave as the motive the preparation of taking the tonsure, though in reality it was to provide a diversion. The six months spent in this happy society gradually effaced his melancholy and he became once again susceptible to happiness. Duringthis interval of waiting, Marmontel had the good fortune to be further occupied as tutor to one of the sons of Marquis of Linars.

When the time came for taking the tonsure, he went to the seminary of Limoges. There he found twelve other candidates like himself under the eyes of three Sulpicians, who were supposed to observe the characters, dispositions, qualities and talents of the candidates and render an account of them to the bishop. Marmontel again showed himself adroit in the art of becoming noticed and distinguished from the crowd in order to be well recommended. Instead of amusing himself with his companions by playing "le petit palet"

(a game which he frankly disliked) during the hour of recreation, he spent the time walking by himself. The moment of his début was not long in coming. Observing him thus in solitude, one of the Sulpicians engaged him in conversation and thereafter, every day, during the walking-hour, he had as auditors the three Sulpicians who were much impressed by his knowledge and seriousness. One can easily imagine that Marmontel indulged in all the pleasure of display; yet no one can say but that it was an innocent and legitimate means of a youth who was ambitious to get along in the world, particularly since, once having achieved what he wanted, he spared no effort to merit it. The result was that he was personally commended by the bishop and recommended to the Archbishop of Bourges where he was to complete his studies.

On his return to Linars, Marmontel received a letter full of despair from his mother, because of a rumor that he had enlisted in the company of the Count of Linars, the marquis's brother. Marmontel set out at once in feverish anxiety to assure and console his mother. Marmontel found her recovered from her fears on the strength of the letters he had written her and delighted with the prospect that the bishop's protection afforded. However, an incident occurred which changed his plans entirely. Father Noaillac, professor of rhetoric at Clermont, in passing through Bort on his way to Toulouse, came and invited himself to dine with Marmontel.

This visit had a premeditated design. After flattering Marmontel on his success in teaching at Clermont, he turned the conversation to his future projects. Marmontel confided to him his plans to which Father Noaillac listened with a disdainful air. He then proceeded to point out to him the disadvantages of placing himself under the dependence and at the mercy of the Archbishop of Bourges; the five years of theology during which time Marmontel would be his pensioner and his family aided by charitable donations. On the other hand, in becoming a Jesuit, he would put himself in a position to maintain himself and his family by the avenues of fortune and ambition that were open to them as a society. When Marmontel opposed the length of their novitiate and the obligation of beginning by teaching the lower classes, Father Noaillac assured him that though the law was invariable in the case of the first, it was by no means in that of the second.

Both his own and his mother's pride persuaded them to decline the Bishop's offer and Marmontel left for Toulouse undecided as yet whether to become a Jesuit.

Upon his arrival at Toulouse, Father Noaillac conducted him immediately to the provincial. But before making his final decision Marmontel first asked to be permitted to write to his mother, whom he had not had the courage, when at home, to consult on that particular subject. His mother saw only the

dependence, submission and blind obedience that this involved and with her answer, the Jesuit idea was promptly discarded.

Marmontel's ambition then was to procure a school of philosophy but his age was an obstacle. Fortune, however, again came to his aid. The professor of philosophy at the Bernardine Seminary had been taken ill and a substitute was necessary. The position was secured for Marmontel through Morin, a former private tutor, now distinguished in the university. It was a most difficult post for an eighteen year old youth to fill. His associates were almost all old, bearded men and scarcely none of his pupils younger than himself. It is evident that Marmontel was aware that a teacher is either made or marred by the impression he creates the first day. To that end, Marmontel composed with care his first lecture and learned it by heart. The young Bernardins and their superiors waited with contemptuous smiles. With gravity and dignity, Marmontel ascended the platform, folded his arms and began his lecture. The attitude of his auditors changed first from scorn to astonishment and then to esteem. His success was complete. It necessitated, however, that he continue the gascon trick of giving his lectures without seeming reflection or notes. Upon the return of the regular professor, he obtained a place at the college St. Catherine.

Marmontel remained at Toulouse for four years--from 1741 to 1745. Along with his teaching, he pursued his philosophical

studies at the college of the Jesuits and at the college of the Doctrinares, entering himself at the canon law school the last two years.

It was during the years at Toulouse that Marmontel conceived the idea of becoming a poet. The academy of "Jeux Floraux" was distributing rich prizes every year for poetry in which Marmontel was sure he could excel. His models for studying the rules of poetry were the odes of J. P. Rousseau. Having composed a poem on gun-powder, so impressed was he by the excellence of what he had written and so certain of the award, that when it failed to receive even honorable mention, in indignation over what he termed an injustice, he wrote to Voltaire and sent him his poem to criticize. This was the beginning of the friendship between Marmontel and Voltaire which lasted for thirty-five years. On Marmontel's side, "it was an affection based on admiration and gratitude; on Voltaire's, a profound esteem for an honest man and excellent disciple who did honor to his master without ever becoming his flatterer."[5]

Marmontel continued to write, however, for the "Jeux Floraux" and began to obtain prizes every year. The year that he carried away all the prizes amid thunderous applause was only a triumph to the vain-glory of youth, since Marmontel says that not one of the essays which were then thought so brilliant could even be read with indulgence forty years

[5]S. Lenal, Chapter II, p. 68.

after. They were, however, the incentive for launching him on a literary career at Paris.

These successes, with his public disputations, served to increase the number of pupils in his school and enabled him to send additional aid to his mother and establish his oldest brother in a school at Toulouse. Marmontel as yet had not renounced his intention of priesthood, but when he presented himself to the archbishop for permission to be ordained, the latter answered that, "Marmontel was only a gallant abbé, wholly occupied with poetry, paying court to the ladies and even sometimes, in the dusk of the evening, taking walks with pretty girls."[6]

Meanwhile, Voltaire was pressing Marmontel to come to Paris and soon a decision had to be made. As was his custom, he made a visit to his mother first. How shocked and grieved he was to find the stamp of the dread disease on her features. But she succeeded in deceiving him as to the seriousness of it, lest some pleasure of his visit be marred by anxiety over her health. The excitement of the visit, the fêting of her son, and the animated conversations told on her and at the physician's opinion that his visit was hurtful to her, Marmontel left. Both concealed the affliction of parting. Her advice as to his future career was a model of sane judgment. I give it here in full.

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[6] Marmontel, Memoirs.

"The profession of the church, essentially imposes two duties: that of being pious, and that of being chaste; it is impossible to be a good priest but at this price, and on these two points it behooves you to examine yourself. As to the bar, if you enter there, I must require from you the most inviolable promise that you will never affirm what you do not believe to be true, nor ever defend what you believe is not just. With regard to the career that M. de Voltaire invites you to pursue, I think it a prudent precaution to assure to yourself at Paris a situation that may leave you time to instruct yourself and to acquire more talent; for you must not flatter yourself; what you have already done is but little. If M. de Voltaire can procure you some honorable, liberal and sure employment, go, my dear son, go, enter the lists of fame and fortune; I consent: but never forget that the most honorable and most dignified companion of genius is virtue."[7]

The final decision was reached when Marmontel received a note from Voltaire, promising him the protection of the comptroller-general of finance, M. Orri. So, arranging his affairs, he left for Paris October 1745 with high hopes in his heart and 300 francs in his pocket. He employed his time gainfully on the journey to translate into verse Pope's poem, "The Rape of the Lock."

His meeting with the famous Voltaire ended in an unexpected blow. M. Orri was no longer in favor. Voltaire's offer of assistance was generous but Marmontel was not of the character to take advantage of it. He sold his translation in exchange for groceries and procured a cheap lodging. With economy, such as staying in bed in winter to save fuel, he planned that he might get along for the next eight months.

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[7] Marmontel, Memoirs.

Then he turned his attention to producing a poem that would win the prize at the French Academy and to the art of play-writing as Voltaire had advised him. Through Voltaire he secured a free admission to the theatre which permitted him to study it at first hand. Meanwhile, through his amiable social qualities, he made many friends, especially those of Vauvenargues and Beauvin whom he met every evening at the Procope coffee-house. Besides his self-respect, love of study and the habit of submitting to privation, the support of Voltaire and the friendship of the virtuous Vauvenargues kept him away from the temptations which Paris offered. For a short time the three friends lived together and edited the "Literary Journal." This enterprise did not last long for it was forbidden and seized, not having paid the required three hundred francs to the "Journal des savants" exacted from a new literary leaf.

The comfort and tranquility that Marmontel had enjoyed at Toulouse, compared with his poverty at Paris made him regret bitterly his coming. This time fortune secured for him a home with Mme. Harenc as tutor to her grandson, and though he remained with her less than a year (autumn of 1746-1747), he could henceforth call her home his own. That same year (1747) his joy at again receiving the prize of the French Academy was mingled with the crushing grief at the death of his mother as well as that of Vauvenargues.

His tragedy, "Denys le tyran," dedicated to Voltaire had been finished at Mme. Harenc's. It was produced in 1748 with an extravagant success which left Marmontel staggering from the effects. It is but fair to state that both the success of "Denys" and that of "Aristomène" in 1749 was in part due to the interpretation of Mlle. Clarion, the beautiful actress, to whom Marmontel had given the rôles in preference to Mlle. Gaussin, another no less beautiful and talented actress, though wholly unsuited to the parts, whose enmity he thereby incurred.

After the celebrity which the success of "Denys" had made of Marmontel, he was seized by a number of people who bore him away in the vortex of Paris. For the next five years he entered upon a life of dissipation which his pliant nature could not resist when opportunity and pleasure united. If excuses were to be found for him, one would say that the eighteenth century society and morals offered no support to virtue and that it was the rule rather than the exception of a man of fame. However, Marmontel has had the delicacy in his memoirs to respect both his readers and his mistresses, neither of whom J. J. Rousseau spared in the brutal realism of his "Confessions." Marmontel's passion for the capricious and coquettish Mlle. Navarre and the consequent torment when finding himself supplanted by the Chevalier of Mirabeau were in all probability only the sentiments of self-love and

wounded vanity, instead of the vexation and pains of love.

From this depression Marmontel emerged with a tint of philosophy. Since 1749 he had been a frequent guest at the salons of Mlle. l'Espinasse, Mme du Deffand and Mme. Geoffrin, gathering places famous for letters and philosophic thought. Here he met such well-known characters as D'Alembert, Diderot, Rousseau, Grimm, Helvetius and Baron d'Holbach whose philosophic reasonings were already beginning to show their influence and were soon to precipitate a struggle that would upset all the accepted traditions of State and Church. Marmontel frequented too the lighter society of the Menus-Plaisirs, a group made up mainly of pleasure-loving men. It was in this society that he formed the acquaintance of the musician , Rameau, with whom he jointly wrote an opera "Acanthe and Céphisie" and later "La Guirlande" and "Les Sybarites," all of which were successful. But though he composed poetry for French music, his ear was more and more charmed by the Italian forms, which was soon to involve him in a warm defense of Piccini against Gluck.

Marmontel's next three tragedies produced in 1750, 1752, and 1753 were all failures, despite the success which Voltaire had predicted of them. The cause was not that they were any worse than the first two, but people like La Harpe who rapped him for his little respect for the laws of tragedy, and the bitter enmity of Fréron who criticized him and his works

severely. Add to that, other enemies, for example, Mlle. Gaussin and the members of the café Procope which he had deserted after his first successes. Marmontel loved tragedy and never became bitter against it because of his own failures.

In 1753, in discouragement of his talents, he appealed to Mme. de Pompadour to obtain for him some employment in which he might be more useful than in an art for which he himself felt himself unfit. Through her kindness, because of a complimentary poem which he had written about the king, he obtained the post of "sécretaire des bâtiments," a sinecure which required only two days a week from him, leaving him ample time for study and reflection. Marmontel says that the five years (1753-1758) which he spent at Versailles were among the happiest of his life. They mark as well a transition from youth to maturity. His life took on a regularity and prudence heretofore unknown. His character developed through meditation and study while his reason assumed a solidarity, capable of exerting itself and regulating his future actions. Before leaving Pairs, he had been engaged by the chiefs of the Encyclopedia to contribute articles on belles-lettres. The preparation of these articles, interspersed with excursions to the court at Fontainebleau for diversion, occupied his leisure time. During this period, his eldest sister was married to his boyhood friend and Marmontel, who had a faculty for maintaining relations and friendships which might prove useful to him, was able to secure

for his brother-in-law a position of considerable responsibility at Saumur.

The spirit of philosophy was now at its greatest height. The "gens de lettres" of the period were gaining redoutable strength through the ties of the salons and the common work around which they were grouped, namely, the Encyclopedia. European prestige added to their strength. Marmontel as one of the collaborators of the Encyclopedia was finding the intervals between Versailles and Paris too long. He missed the charm of the literary and philosophic society. His ambition to become a member of the Academy required a definite career of letters. Therefore, when it became necessary to appoint a successor to Bissy, the former editor of the literary journal called "Mercure," Marmontel, who had contributed much to the success of the journal by his "Contes Moraux," seemed the logical successor and through Mme. de Pompadour, he gladly accepted the editorship in 1758. ~~he gladly accepted the editorship in 1758~~.

The "Mercure" was not a single literary journal, but one, like the Spectator of Addison and Steele, calculated to embrace a vast variety of subjects to appeal to the various tastes of the subscribers. The first volume, which appeared in August 1758 contained a preface in which Marmontel set forth the plans he purposed to carry out. The "Mercure" was to be but the "farmer and steward." How well he carried

this out, is measured by the success which the "Mercure" had under him. Each one, whether the scientist or the literary man, the politician or the reader of local gossip, found what might interest him. In short, it combined the useful with the agreeable. Throughout, Marmontel preserved the attitude that the "journalist is the true mediator between authors and public."[8] His analytical and critical extracts were free from all personal satire. He wounded no one's feelings. The same was true when he defended the cause of the comedians or took up the gauntlet in behalf of the Italian music. In political opinions, he observed a "juste milieu;" a natural kindliness made him over-indulgent and blind to defects, but in most cases, though he does not pretend to be a good judge of everything, he was a critic in advance of his age.

On his return to Paris, Marmontel had taken lodgings with Mme. Geoffrin and was an admitted guest at her weekly dinners; on Mondays, for artists; on Wednesdays, for men of letters. Mme. Geoffrin combined a sense of fitness, justness and good sense who had the art of restoring decorum when the vivacity of conversations bordered on license. Marmontel describes with detail the whole circle of convivial friends who assembled there. But other societies and intimate friends as well, claimed Marmontel's leisure hours, equally charming and with a greater liberty of thought.

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[8] Marmontel, Memoirs.

At the request of Mme de Pompadour, Marmontel had retouched the "Venceslaus" of Rotrou, suppressing the crudities, altering the character of the hero and changing the ending to point out a moral. It was rather poorly done, giving rise to Fréron's criticism that, "He had replaced the corpulence of Rotrou with gaunt and fleshless verse." The play had some measure of success after Marmontel had changed back to the primitive ending. But in the public performance at Versailles, the actor Le Kain, who detested Marmontel, played the trick of substituting the original Rotrou version in his part with disastrous results. Marmontel outraged, intended to expose the insolence through the "Mercure." The Duke d'Aumont[9] imposed silence on him in a letter stating that "jokes more or less insulting die of themselves if not kept alive by controversy." Fréron, loud in his criticism at any attempt to retouch original versions triumphed and indulged in odious personalities, which Marmontel did not deign to answer. The quarrel finally died down, but later had serious consequences for Marmontel.

The Duke d'Aumont and Cury, a former intendant of the Menus-Plaisirs and a friend of Marmontel's, were bitter enemies. As Marmontel tells us in his Memoirs, Cury had amused himself by writing a parody of "Cinna," directed as a satire against the Duke d'Aumont. Marmontel retained

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[9] Member of the King's Court.

many of those verses in memory and quoted them in a company of what was supposed to be only confidential friends, at Mme. Geoffrin's. The next day he was denounced to the Duke d'Aumont and by him to the King, as the author of this satire. There are a few contradictions here which may leave some in doubt whether Marmontel was entirely innocent of composing a part himself. Marmontel in his Memoirs, makes Cury the sole author, but in a letter to the Duke (November 1759) he says there were several. Might he not have thought to shield one better, by implying the guilt of many? In his Memoirs, Marmontel gives the Christmas holidays as the time of the writing, whereas the letter to the Duke is written in November.

Such an error is apt to occur when recalling the incident after many years. It seems unnecessary to distrust the accuracy of the Memoirs that have been written by a man regarded as essentially honest and accurate. There can be no doubt that Marmontel delighted in repeating the verses to get back at the Duke, but the substitutions that were made in the parody, of these he was guiltless. Marmontel at once wrote to the Duke d'Aumont to assure him that he was not the author of the satire attributed to him. He returned tit for tat when he quoted to him the same maxim, of "trifles dying of themselves if not kept alive by controversy." This was taken as a fresh insult and Marmontel

was sent to the Bastille by a "lettre de cachet." He remained there eleven days, from December 28 to January 7, 1760. His treatment was royal. He employed his time advantageously by making a translation of the "Pharsalia" of Lucan into verse. The imprisonment deprived him of the patent to the "Mercure," but the publicity which he gained by having been imprisoned in the Bastille more than made up for it.

The loss of the "Mercure" had other compensations as well. In the first place, it had been the means of inducing him to renounce a project of marriage with a Mlle. S. which had been lightly formed; and most important of all, it restored him to the independence of devoting his talents elsewhere, which he had been willing to sacrifice for the four or five thousand francs that the "Mercure" would bring him. His admission to the Academy was thereby hastened.

His translation of Lucan advanced rapidly; at the same time he was preparing materials for his "Art of Poetry" and the celebrity of the Moral Tales increased with every edition. A voyage to Bordeaux, Nimes, Vaucluse, Aix and Lyons brought him finally to Geneva for a delightful visit with Voltaire, who had been in exile since 1754 for his "Essai sur les Moeurs." In his description of these travels, Marmontel reveals that he is not touched by the beauty of nature at all, but only by that which regards commerce,

industry and the arts of peace and war. He is no dreamer but practical and material. People, rather than nature, appealed to him.

Marmontel found that the most enjoyable existence was that of leading a free life passing from city to country in the company of men of wit, ladies of charm with moments of seclusion for himself. But none of these pleasures could ever rob Marmontel of the simplest and happiest of all--that of the fortnight which he spent each year with his sister, Mme. Odde. It was there he says, "that the whole sensibility of his soul was absorbed in enjoyment."[10] Death had deprived him of all his family with the exception of her and an old aunt.

Meanwhile, his enemies were busy at Paris. To become a member of the Academy the sanction of the king was necessary. Reports were spreading that Marmontel was lost in the king's esteem. Marmontel with unconcern applied himself to complete the "Pharsalia" of Lucan and his "Poétique Française;" adding new Tales and then sent his "Epître aux Poêtes," now finished, to the Academy. Thomas and Delille also had both sent excellent works. In spite of the boldness of the "Epître aux Poêtes" and the animosity of the classicist party, it carried off the prize. With the next vacanty (1763), Marmontel and the abbé de Radouvilliers were both candidates. Marmontel,

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[10] Marmontel, Memoirs.

doubtful of the king's favor toward him and assured that the abbé of Radouvilliers would carry the votes, withdrew as candidate, thereby gaining Radouvillier's firm friendship. Besides, the "Poétique Française," with which he hoped to gain the king's favor, was still in press. In this kind of advertising, Marmontel had no equal in shrewdness. Immediately after the completion of the printing of the "Poétique," he presented a magnificently bound copy to the king, who received him well; another to the Academy and other copies to the Academicians whom he knew were favorable to him. At the death of Bougainville, when Marmontel thought the path clear, the enemy party opposed another candidate--Thomas. Thomas, refusing to be the tool of an intrigue, despite the threat of the loss of his position,[11] withdrew and Marmontel was elected November 23, 1763.

Marmontel's election was, besides a personal triumph, a triumph for the philosophers as well. During the Regency, there had been a transformation in the Academy. There was a greater independence and no longer were the members so much in the service of patrons or the rich. Most of the philosophers or men of letters, through the fraternity of the salons and the Encyclopedia were being admitted or associated with the Academy. They sought membership in it for the renown it gave them and the greater freedom from attacks. Un-

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11 Thomas lost his position as private secretary to the Duc de Praslin.

fortunately, the liberty of the Academy was theoretical only. For though it was under the protection of the government, protection and liberty are not the same. The dominant opinion in the Academy was violently opposed to the philosophic spirit. The Academy combined its belief in the most absolute monarchy with the ultra christian idea docile to the Jesuits and enemy of every free-thinker. Their means of combat were the same--declamations, intrigues, insults and intolerance.

As figures such as Voltaire, Duclos, and D'Alembert became permanent secretaries to the Academy, they succeeded in dominating and putting their stamp on it. With D'Alembert in 1754 the Academy became a place of security for philosophers. Thus, the liberty and equality which Richelieu had established as the fundamental laws of the company, were now being invoked as rights against the heads of the state, against government and the official religion. Before 1760, Marmontel's election would have been regarded very natural. His works, through their abundance and variety gave him a right to the Academy. But his imprisonment at Vincennes, the first stage of glory in 1758, had brought him reputation and he had gained the aureole of the persecuted man of letters. His canditature had the charm of forbidden fruit. His election was decisive. It bore witness that the philosophic propaganda in the Academy had produced fruit and this victory ended by rallying the timid, who are always

for the strongest party. Marmontel's speech upon his reception to the Academy was a eulogy on the union which reigned among men of letters! We can imagine the sneers of Fréron.

The subject of Belisarius, the Byzantine general under Justiniam, had long been intriguing Marmontel as a literary subject of moral worth. During the months that Marmontel got together the material on this subject, he, who was usually of such robust health, was suffering from a malady which he believed would be his last. But as the work progressed the charm and interest he felt in his subject aided in conquering his illness and he fully recovered.

The pleasure at the success that the reading of "Belisarius" had at the Academy was dimmed by the disapprobation he felt it would excite at the Sorbonne. Marmontel took every precaution to have no enemies at the court and the parliament. He dedicated the work to Louis XV to show that it was not intended as a satire against the kingdom, since the analogy between the two reigns was rather striking. Though the work failed to pass the approval of several censors, he at last found one who was less difficult and "Belisarius" was printed. As soon as it appeared, the theologians at the Sorbonne were in an uproar. The struggle between the church and the philosophers was at its height at this time (1767). Coger, a subordinate of M. Riballier, of the faculty

of theology, led the attack against Marmontel by trying to engage the court in the dispute saying that Marmontel "insinuates that the government belongs to the people and scorns the rights of kings." The subject of politics failed to affect the court, so the theologians got busy on the fifteenth chapter on religious tolerance. However, before the Sorbonne had extracted from "Belisarius" what they had determined to censure, nine thousand copies had already been sold and the second and third editions were about to appear. Meanwhile the Sorbonne had tried to negotiate with Marmontel who merely temporized. They collected thirty-seven passages which they deemed heretical, deistic, impious, the "enemies of the throne and the altar," and published them under the title "Indiculus" to which Voltaire immediately added the epithet "Ridiculus." The Church worked against its own interests by giving notoriety to writers already loved by the public. Forty thousand copies of "Belisarius" were sold within a year. The sovereigns of Europe, who could subscribe to it because of its moderation, wrote to Marmontel bestowing praises on it. Not even a masterpiece of Voltaire had attained such public approbation. Marmontel contributed then, by the uproar that his work made, to the next and definite triumph of the good cause.

The friendship of Mme. Geoffin had cooled somewhat because of the adventure of "Belisarius" and finding it natural that she should have some repugnance in lodging a censured

author in her house, Marmontel took up abode with his friend. Mlle. Clarion where he lived from 1768-1773. During this period, Marmontel's interest in music revived. Mention has been made of his collaboration with Rameau, who represents the highest 18th century attainment of the classic style in French music. Marmontel now composed the words for some of the music of Guétry, the musician of feasts and ceremonies of the French Revolution. In 1772, through the death of Duclos, the place of historiographer of France was given him without any solicitation on his part.

The following year, 1773, Marmontel lost his sister, Mme. Odde through the same fatal disease. He had moved to the home of Mme. de Siran and it was here that Mme. Odde came and passed a year with him. Marmontel divided his time between history and the Encyclopedia and fulfilled his office of historiographer with care.

Marmontel had long thought that he ought to give a character to opera, analagous to the "Moral Tales." He hoped to find a musician capable of composing Italian music on French verses. He found him in Piccinni to whom he taught the French language, and composed with him "Roland" which had a most glorious success. In the rivalry between the two schools of Gluck and Piccinni, the skillful criticism with which he took up the defense of the latter heaped on him bitter attack but also gained for him a place in the sun.

Meanwhile, fate was preparing a new destiny for him. The Abbé Morellet and he had frequented the same societies for twenty years, sharing the same sentiments, if not opinions, and had the greatest esteem for each other. Abbé Morellet's widowed sister had recently come from Lyons to make her home with him, bringing with her a daughter of eighteen or nineteen. Marmontel was charmed by the beauty and amiable qualities of the young girl but the difference in their ages and his slender fortune seemed too great obstacles to think of aspiring to marriage. He was encouraged, however, by his friends and the Morellets. While Marmontel's sister and her children were living, Marmontel had had no other thought than to pass his declining years in the calm and peaceful retreat of a beloved sister and her family. At her death, he was confronted by the sad visions of the solitude of celibacy and neglected old age. No doubt Marmontel weighed carefully the pros and cons of the domestic vexations of marriage, of which he had probably seen too many examples, and the misfortune of an old man dragging out a lonely, wearisome life. Marmontel was spared both, for no union could have been more perfect than that of Marmontel and his wife. Morellet has described his niece as "pretty, well built, of a good character, a piquant wit and a sensitive soul."[12] Marmontel in his Memoirs and in the preface to one of the editions[13]

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[12] Morellet, Memoirs, Vol. 1.
[13] Oeuvres, L'Epître dédicatoire, Née de la Rochelle.

of his "Oeuvres" eulogizes her and embellishes her with every virtue. Morellet, though admitting the virtues that Marmontel has as a husband and father, gives as much credit to his niece for their happiness, by her tact in Marmontel's moments of irritability. To Marmontel, incapable of violent passions, love was an effervescence of youth; in a riper age, a sweet and calm passion which took refuge in a free union or a marriage as in a tranquil harbor. Marmontel, then, in his mature age, settles down to the tranquility of domestic life. Marriage and the responsibilities of a husband and a father cured him of his indulgence for the current morals and caused him to judge rationally the evil of these vices. Thus many a man turns moralist in his old age.

The marriage was celebrated on October 11, 1777, amidst great festivities. Marmontel published "Les Incas" this year, a moralizing novel similar to "Bélisaire." But it was received without any stir. The favorable moment was past. The struggle between the Church and the philosophers was appeased and the Sorbonne was quiet.

The Marmontels lived with the Morellets, each paying a share of the expenses. From 1780 their summers were spent at the Morellet's country home at Saint-Brice. In 1782, with the increase of his family as well as his fortune, Marmontel left the Morellet's and took a house near them at Guignon. The comfort in which his family could live rendered this

period up to the revolution the most attractive and charming in his life and social intercourse.

The salon of Mme. Necker had succeeded that of Mme. Geoffrin. Both Marmontel and his wife were intimate with Mme. Necker and Marmontel was a frequent guest in her salon. But the philosophers' ranks had thinned and a mixture of two generations had taken their place. Only a few friends of olden times, like St. Lambert and the comtesse D'Houdetôt remained. Marmontel was completely happy in the friends of his wife, his work (he was writing the "Elements of Literature) and in the instruction of his children. Five children were born of his marriage, two of whom died in early childhood. Of the remaining three, two died before attaining the age of thirty.

Marmontel took an active part in the quarrel between the dramatic authors and the actors of the king. The writers were being deprived of the legitimate part of their receipts by the actors. Marmontel played the rôle of conciliator and by his actions won for himself the sympathies of the Academy. He was mentioned for his activity, kindliness and love for conciliation, a person who did not wait until he became permanent secretary to have the interests of the Academy at heart. So with D'Alembert's death in 1783, he became his natural successor as permanent secretary. (In 1785, he joined with that position that of historiographer of public buildings)

Marmontel was not cast for the lot of a director. He succeeded, however, in promoting a good fellowship in the Academy due to his skillful mediation. He encouraged the presence of the Academicians at each meeting by raising their attendance from one and a half francs to three francs. The salary of secretary was likewise raised from twelve hundred francs to three thousand francs. The meetings became more alive due to the fact that, in the work submitted to the Academy, he was a good reader. The Salle was redecorated and more ladies encouraged to attend. He corrected the abuse of filling the room with the partisans of a few, by distributing free tickets equally among Academicians and only as many as the hall would hold, reserving sixteen tickets for the new member and other privileged people. The prizes offered for "Les Devoirs de l'homme et du citoyen," "Eloge de Rousseau," "Eloge de d'Alembert" and an ode "Sur la mort du Prince Léopold de Brunswick" failed to attract many competitors and except in the case of the last, and that only after two years, no one qualified for the prizes, whether because of the high standards of the Academy or the really feeble works submitted or perhaps because of the political situation at the time. Marmontel wrote the last two and read them after the prizes had ceased to be offered.

In 1787 M. de Lamoignon, keeper of the great seal, had for a project to reform public instruction, but not having

himself the knowledge necessary for this subject, he engaged Marmontel to develop the plan and system of studies. Marmontel undertook it with enthusiasm and took the School of Saint-Barbe near Grignon as his model in education for a constitutional monarchy. It is in keeping with Marmontel's character that he remarked that "Nothing more was to be feared than the ambition of destroying and innovating everything."[14] Suddenly by one of those commotions that overturned the ministry, M. de Lavoignon was dismissed and exiled and the plan of national instruction was forgotten by the anxiety over the fate of the state.

Marmontel had continued to hope that some necessary reforms would prevent revolution. He was not a politician nor a statesman. He was not profound enough to see that the long growth of injustices would not be satisfied with measures of moderation.

In 1789, Marmontel was named elector to the Etats-Généraux but failed to win the election. Though he was not afraid to speak his opinions, he was too conservative to fit in. He retired to Grignon continuing to voice his opinions, along with La Harpe and Chamfort, through articles to the "Mercure" on such serious subjects as public instruction, mentioned before, the right of Peace and War and the Penalty of Death. La Harpe and Chamfort delivered themselves to the fire of their temperament; Marmontel on the other hand, touched

[14] Marmontel, Memoirs.

on politics only in theory, as one who had no wish to meddle in personal quarrels.

This new use made of the liberty of the press did not fail to bring down the wrath of other newspapers who, believing in the liberty of the press only for themselves, denounced the triumvirate as supporters of the old régime and despotism and enemies of the Constitution, patriotic writers and defenders of liberty.

At the beginning of 1791 Marmontel ceased his articles to the "Mercure" and retired with his wife and three children to the province, at Evreux, Saint-Germain, Couvricour and finally to Ablonville during the disturbances of the Reign of Terror. It was the dignified and prudent conduct of a man whose convictions remained unchanged, yet who saw no profit to himself or others in taking part in bloody quarrels that he had always been the first to believe could be conciliated. How unlike the unworthy actions of La Harpe and Chamfort! Marmontel's age and the general respect for him and his services probably saved him from the fate of those colleagues.[15]

The conflict of opinions between the two parties, aristocrats and democrats in the Academy had been growing also and the discussions there generally degenerated into disputes. Marmontel, having seen the prelude to these internal quarrels, knowing that he would be but a powerless witness in the dissensions of a body, whose union he wished to main-

[15] Chamfort, unsuccessful in his suicide attempt died a prey to the terror and horror of which he had been a witness, Lenal, Chapter 12, p. 587.
La Harpe was imprisoned and then became an ardent foe of the philosophers, Morellet, Memoirs.

tain, fled in time before the storm. His signature figures for the last time on the Academy's register December 31, 1791. Morellet replaced him as secretary until its suppression on August 8, 1793.

With the Revolution, all income had ceased. Three fourths of his fortune was gone. He was poor, but there was no complaint. With the small income from his farm, he lived as honorably in distress as he had lived in abundance. On January 4, 1795, the Convention granted three thousand francs to be divided among artists and men of letters. Marmontel shared in this.

In 1795, he refused the honor of president of the Electoral Assembly of the Department of Eure, but accepted in 1797 as Secretary of the Conseil d'Anciens with special duty to demand the re-establishment of the Catholic ceremonies. There was at that time before the Conseil d'Anciens a question as to what should be done about the books confiscated or condemned, which had accumulated in the literary deposits. Marmontel in the name of the Commission of the Institute which had been instructed to examine the means of disposal, made a report relative to the manner of sane distribution of the books.

The propositions were not adopted. The "coup d'état" of September 4, 1797, prevented Marmontel from delivering his speech on the "Opinion sur le libre exercise des cultes."

This speech was inspired by tolerance and was a defense of the right of Catholic worship with all its insignia, which had been forbidden by the Revolution. It shows that Marmontel has succombed to the religion of his childhood, an influence in which age and misfortune perhaps were factors.

As a member of the Council of Ancients, Marmontel remained at Paris in the exercise of his duties till his election was declared void, when he went back to his cottage at Ablonville. There he died suddenly of apoplexy on the thirty-first of December 1779. He was buried in his own garden with Catholic rites, according to his wishes. In after years, curious tourists wore a path to his grave and contributed much to the income of the then proprietors. In 1866, through the efforts of his last two relatives--M. Marmontel, professor of music at the Conservatory and his cousin--the remains were removed to the cemetery of St. Aubain-sur-Gaillon.

L I T E R A R Y W O R K O F M A R M O N T E L

II

MARMONTEL'S LITERARY WORK

The abundance and diversity of Marmontel's works show how active, facile and versatile were his talents. There is scarcely any type of literature that Marmontel has not attempted. He wrote tragedies and comic operas; he wrote short stories and long novels; he was translator, grammarian and historian; poet and critic; and in everything a moralist and a philosopher. Some of his works brought him great acclaim, nearly all of them brought him moderate success.

Marmontel's first attempts in writing began with poetry. His early poems wonprizes at the Academy of Floral Games and his later ones at the French Academy. This would seem to indicate that Marmontel is a good poet. But paradoxical though it may be, Marmontel is no poet. His poetry is flat and mediocre. The description of almost all French and much English verse written in his time, that it is "prose cut into lengths" is cruel but not unjust. In Marmontel's case, the criticism is certainly justified. But "his verse has the qualities which the age demanded of it--correctness, polish and craftsmanship up to a certain point."[1]

Many of his poems were inspired or rather dictated by some minor incident connected with some famous persons in the hope that the flattery might bring some material reward.

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[1] Moral Tales, George Saintsbury, Introd.

Among the most noteworthy poems might be mentioned "Epîtres aux poètes," a poem in which he points out the superiority of the contemporary epoch over all others in the order of imaginationand taste. He cites as authorities living examples but not to their liking; "Epître à Bernice," verses which announce Dulille and A. Chenier; "Epîtres sur l'incendie de l'Hôtel-Dieu," a sincere and inspired poem disclosing the miserable conditions of the hospital; "Polymnie," a satiric poem dealing with the "musical wars" between the Gluckists and Piccinnists. Marmontel, through his study of poetry and its development in other languages besides French, knew and appreciated poetry and was far superior as a critic than as a writer of it.

Of the six tragedies which Marmontel wrote, (five of which were produced) only the first two, "Denys le tyran" and "Aristomène" were really successful. The succeeding plays, "Cleopâtre" and "Les Héraclides"were received with decreasing popularity and finally ended in complete failure with "Egyptus."

There were very few plays written during this time and any new play that was produced was heralded as an event. The public would be more charitable in its criticism at first, especially when the characters of the plays were interpreted by fine acting. These were probably the chief reasons for the tremendous success of Marmontel's first plays.

Marmontel had no particular talent as a playwright. He was too young to have sounded the depths of his subjects or his characters and had not enough experience to know how to write well. The plays were poorly constructed, his subjects badly chosen, his characters unnatural, the incidents improbable. Above all, he believed it necessary to preach virtue through examples of heroism.

Marmontel's plays have many characteristics that forecast romanticism. There are traces of romantic imagination, a great deal of sentiment and especially a disrespect for the laws of classic unities, for Marmontel believed that rules repressed both imagination and talent.

Marmontel's comic operas, pastorals, ballets and lyric tragedies fared better than his tragedies, combined as they were with music from the best composers. Marmontel's appreciation for music was as keen as for that of poetry. He believed that both arts were related and that music should express and paint as well as art. To him, music was a universal language since all music had the same tones, movements, harmony and melody. It was simply that some countries spoke its language better than others. Admiring as he did the Italian music, he sought in collaboration with Guétry and later with Piccinni, to have music composed on French verses. With Guétry, Marmontel was instrumental in helping to transform comic opera by introducing more variety in the

form of duets and ariettas and thus gradually displacing the former vaudeville. In "Silvain" and "Le Huron" appeared the necessary recitative which "showed that the French language was musical enough to produce the greatest effects in the hands of a skillful composer."[2]

The great success of "Zémaire et Azor" encouraged Marmontel and Guétry to try lyric tragedy. Two years later, "Céphale et Procris" was produced but the Court where it was first played, found that it resembled too much the previous comic opera. The best of the lyric tragedies was that of "Didon" for which Piccinni furnished the music. In Piccinni, Marmontel at last had realized his ideal of fusing Italian music and French verses. "Didon" was played with tremendous success both at Court and later at Paris. The subject was well chosen, the action rapid and the ending truly tragic. The subject of "Pénélope," whose loyalty to a husband was still unshaken after twenty years, seemed ridiculous to 18th century morals and in spite of Piccinni's talent, it failed.

Not only did Marmontel write original poetry, plays and verses for comic opera and lyric tragedy, but he often translated and adapted works of other authors to suit 18th century taste. His first translation was that of Pope's "Rape of the Lock" in 1746 which he translated from the prose of l'abbé Desfontaines, since Marmontel did not know English.

[2] La Harpe, Oeuvres, 1778.

The translation of Lucan's "Pharsalia" was very inexact, because Marmontel, being a critic and a man of tastes, corrected what seemed to him bad taste in Lucan. He effaced details which to him weakened the verses; when Lucan was obscure, he lengthened the passages to make them clear. In short, he pruned and embellished the poem so that, though the result was agreeable enough, it was disfigured by lending it a kind of beauty not at all becoming to it.

Marmontel used the same method in Rotrou's play, "Venceslas." No writer of his epoch necessarily had any scruples about retouching the works of ancient authors. To take out the crudities of language, to substitute words and phrases that were obsolete and not understood any longer, was to put the play within the reach of the public and adapt it to the taste of the day. Marmontel, however, wished to preserve the best verses of Rotrou and imitate him in what he added so that what remained would not be archaic and yet would have no modern coloring. He changed the character of the hero and made a different ending to point out the inevitable moral. The result was a mélange that was painful and a play with no "unity of tone."

The adaptation of Quinault's poem "Roland" to lyric tragedy was a great success, however. It was the first collaboration between Piccinni and Marmontel to combine French poetry and Italian music. The action of Quinault's

poem lost nothing by being adapted to music, but the verses that Marmontel reworked and added did not possess the harmony of the original. The bitter enmity of the two rival schools of music and the Director's refusal to pay Marmontel as for new works put an end to any further remodeling of Quinault's poems.

When we deal with Marmontel as an historian, we come to one of his best works, namely, his "Memoirs," the only work, according to Sainte-Beuve, on which his fame deserves to rest. The first part of his "Memoirs" is an intimate study of how character is developed through wholesome family life and a good education. There is no complicated soul, but a normal character that resembles every one's else, with faults and weaknesses that Marmontel confesses to with innocent vanity. But not only does Marmontel portray himself, but he reveals, as though in a picture album, his contemporaries and the events with which they were connected so that the "Memoirs" form an integral part of 18th century history. He presents a fair, impartial picture, without flattery and without grudges or antipathy. There are interesting digressions and anecdotes. The whole is written in a tone of perfect sincerity that inspires confidence. Not only Marmontel's good sense guarantees exactness and truth but it is said that a person "makes up in accuracy what he lacks in genius." In places, Marmontel becomes a little ornate

and declamatory but on the whole, the tone of optimisn and good nature makes the "Memoirs" delightful reading. There is an abrupt change in the 18th book of the "Memoirs" dealing with the Revolution. The tone is hurried and unlike Marmontel. In the 19th, his normal recital is resumed. It appears certain that a good part of the 18th book was not printed as it was first written. Probably parts were suppressed by his heirs as being too dangerous for publication.

The "Memoirs" were written to serve as an instruction for his children. Marmontel doubtless believed it wise to tell his children of his mistakes and the unhappy consequences that they might profit by them.

As historiographer, Marmontel wrote a complete historical account of the "Regency of the Duke of Orleans" as exact and as impartial as his "Memoirs."

George Saintsbury, contrary to Sainte Beuve who admits, however, that Marmontel is an excellent story teller, calls the "Moral Tales" the most famous of Marmontel's works. W. D. Howells, in his introduction to the translation of the "Memoirs," compares them to the stories in the Spectator.

> "If the reader can fancy the humor of some of the stories in the Spectator turned wit, their grace indefinitely enhanced, their not very keen perception of the delicate and the indelicate indefinitely blunted, their characterization sharpened almost to an edge of cynicism at times, he will have something like an image of the "Moral Tales" in his mind."

It was reserved for Marmontel to create the truly moral tale, which took the place of the licentious tale of which the people had tired. Marmontel's tales were so popular that they were translated into all the languages of Europe. Many of them were played in the theatre.

Marmontel had for his object to render virtues amiable and to show that women can be and are virtuous. It was his nature to preach, instruct and moralize. He does all this, yet he does not tire. He describes the morals of the time, especially love and gallantry. He presents the family under all the aspects and society too. We see the bourgeois, the peasant, the noble, the man of finance and the magistrate. All Marmontel's subjects are taken from the sphere in which he lived. The characters may masquerade as Greeks, or Orientals, as Moslems or pagans; they may be named Cecilia and Doriman, Belissa or Lindor, but they are all Frenchmen and Frenchwomen in disguise living in the gay world of Louis XV. Hence in these more or less exact observations, Marmontel has shown us a much better picture of the 18th century than previous contemts. Marmontel imitated some, yet he is no plagiarist. He puts sentimentality in the tales which others were to do after him. Some are dramatic, a few tragic. There is always the same happy ending as inevitable as in a fairy story, but "wheresoever there is a fairy tale of any kind, there is the 'unum necessarium' of

literature and of life."[3] "Heureusement" is one of the best of the "Moral Tales." The story has brevity, rapid dialogue. Without any said he and said she, the characters are well-drawn and the plot simple.

In the "New Moral Tales," written much later, the stories are longer and introduce real personages. The moralizing object of the story is more prominent than ever, but the crisp and direct character of the former stories is somewhat lost.

Marmontel's novels are in reality only moral and political tales much longer than those previously written by him. There are only two, "Bélisaire" and "Les Incas." The success of "Belisarius" throughout Europe was even greater than that of the "Moral Tales." Both the mildness of the "Moral Tales" and the moderation of "Belisarius" made safe yet stimulating reading to which no one need be afraid to subscribe.

The story of "Belisarius" is based on a Byzantine general who lived in the reign of Justinian, who after having served his emperor faithfully for thirty years, was accused of having conspired against him. His property was confiscated and he was put in prison. But the people, whose favorite Belisarius was, revolted and demanded his freedom. Belisarius was not freed, however, before he had been deprived of his

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[3] Moral Tales, tr. George Saintsbury, Introd.

eyesight and so, blind and a beggar with only a child as his guide, he returned home. Tiberius, a young man in the employ of Justinian met Belisarius and so impressed was he by the nobility and the tolerant philosophy of the old man that he could not believe that Belisarius could ever have been guilty of any treason. This came to the ears of the emperor and wishing to learn the truth, he and Tiberius visited Belisarius each day in his garden listening to his dissertations on sovereigns, customs, laws, tolerance and other topics.

Marmontel has followed quite faithfully the story of Procopius, but he has softened the character of both Justinian and Belisarius to a great extent.

In "Belisarius," Marmontel leaves to the church the care of watching over dogma. He says nothing about ecclesiastical tolerance, which he knows impossible, but he asks sovereigns not to lend the support of the secular arm to spiritual power. Kings, though charged to maintain public order, have no right to impose their religion by fire and sword nor to exact unity of dogma and cult in their States, for by so doing, they would only make rebels and hypocrits. "Belisarius" assumed the right claimed by philosophers to "profess without impunity all the doctrines conforming to universal moral, without accepting any cult or religious communion."[4]

[4]Brunel, Les Philosophes et l'Académie Française au 18e Siècle.

The theologians, as soon as they had read the 15th chapter on religious tolerance, were in an uproar. This chapter set forth the idea of a God that is good and merciful whom envious and haughty men (the theologians) have represented angry and revengeful like themselves. The Sorbonne, because of what Marmontel had said about religion, tried to interest the throne in their cause. Coger, a theologian, pointed out that Marmontel had "insinuated that the government belongs to the people and scorns the right of kings." The government ignored the issue, but the battle over the 15th chapter continued.

Others before Marmontel had expressed the same ideas but nothing had been done about it. The few and timid, however, in 1731 had become numerous and strong in 1767. The boldness of Voltaire's disciples had to be crushed at any price and Marmontel was the one most in view. The Sorbonne at first tried to lead the former abbé back to the fold. Marmontel merely temporized and by the time the Sorbonne had picked out the thirty-seven articles to be censured from the 15th chapter, nine thousand copies of "Belisarius" had already circulated and the second and third editions were ready to appear.

Critics have branded "Belisarius" as a novel without value. They have said that it is feeble, commonplace, monotonous, filled with impossible and forced situations,

that it contained nothing new in morals, politics and religion and that its only merit lay in having appeared at an appropriate time. Marmontel closes his story of Belisarius with this comment:

> "Belisarius lived too short a time and his counsels were forgotten with him."

The same can be applied to the book itself and the counsel of tolerance that Marmontel advocated in it. True, the book may not be a masterpiece, but the spirit of justice and of tolerance contained in it, so badly needed in all ages, should not be altogether discounted.

"Les Incas" or the "Destruction of the Empire of Peru" followed "Belisarius." It is the story of the cruelties committed in Peru by the Spaniards in their frenzy to convert the natives. Marmontel wishes to combat fanaticism, a dangerous enemy of tolerance. "Accord to all civil tolerance, not in approving everything as indifferent, but in suffering with patience all that God suffers, and trying to lead men back by a gentle persuasion," is the master thought of the story and Marmontel carefully distinguishes between religion and fanaticism.

The "Destruction of the Empire of Peru" is far superior to "Belisarius." Lenal says that it is the best epic romance either in poetry or in prose that our literature has produced from "Telemachus" to the "Martyrs." But it attracted very little attention, because the struggle between

the Church and the philosophers had by this time calmed down.

The critic in Marmontel is at all times superior to the writer. Mention has been made in the discussion on Marmontel's poetry, plays, operas and translations, of the presence of the critic at all times. It has its beginning in the "Preface to the Henriade" for we see there the germs of certain ideas that appear later in the articles of the Encyclopedia. For example, Marmontel extols Lucan above Vergil and Homer for the great characteristics and the art with which Lucan paints his heroes. In comparing Lucan's style with Voltaire's, Marmontel often finds Lucan bombastic, a weakness not found in Voltaire. These criticisms show that as early as 1746, Marmontel had already reflected and thought for himself.

His "Poétique française" contains his philosophic criticisms on poetry. The "Poétique" is divided into two parts: the first contains elementary ideas and general principles; the second, applies them to the different kinds of poetry. Marmontel's aim is to "enlighten the ordinary man on the beauties of poetry and to render him more sensitive to its enjoyment."[5] Therefore, Marmontel cites modern authors as greater authorities than the ancient ones since they have profited by the experience of all the years which have elapsed; and in studying the ancients, they have

[5]Poétique française, Preface.

been able to judge the whole more clearly, besides having to their credit a half century of philosophy. Reason, sentiment and Nature, Marmontel says, are his great authorities.

Marmontel's greatest work as a critic is his "Eléments de littérature." The "Eléments" are the result of more than thirty years of continuous work. They comprise the first articles that Marmontel wrote for the Encyclopedia, entire passages from the "Poétique," the articles belonging to the "Supplément" and the articles from the "Encyclopédie Méthodique." Marmontel's aim in writing the "Eléments" was "to abridge the studies of art, for young people, for busy authors and also for people in general who do not have the time or courage to pursue long lectures."[6] His design was to define rather than to reason.

M. Faguet in his "Histoire de la littérature française" pays this tribute to the "Eléments."

> "This work deserves the greatest praise that a work in criticism can receive; it is one hundred and fifty years old and it is not ridiculous; people still read it with pleasure and with a great deal of profit; everyone ought to have read it."[7]

The work is a discussion of various topics in literature arranged in alphabetical order, the whole of which constitutes an excellent textbook on rhetoric. Marmontel discusses ancient and modern writers and says that in order to establish

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[6] Eléments de littérature, Preface.
[7] Ibid.

a ~~first~~ just parallel between the two, several centuries must elapse, since modern culture comprises only a period of four hundred years, while antiquity has to its credit over a thousand. As for rules of taste, they are not "infallible enough to have the right to control genius." Marmontel's theory of beauty is purely classic. It supposes "regularity, order, symmetry, virtue, unity, proportion, fitness and harmony." Although reality may not be beautiful, the imitations of it in art must be so. All art must have a moral purpose.

Marmontel continues his discussion with tragedy--its declamation, costumes, decoration and unities. One can note the foreshadowing of romanticism in what he says. He believes modern drama superior to ancient drama. In the latter, "man falls into peril and unhappiness through a cause outside of himself"; in the former, through a cause "within himself." Fatality renders the latter tragic, the spring of tragic action within the heart of man renders the former tragic. Marmontel believes in simple and natural acting, in local color both in costumes and scenery. He attacks the unities of time and place, saying that the "entre-actes" would make up for the unities.

Marmontel discusses popular tragedy, drama, farce and realism and continues with versification, language and style. Popular tragedy is equal to heroic tragedy if the author

invents a subject "pathetic and moral, not trivial nor romantic" and "knows how to choose in the language of the people what is at once decent and natural." He does not suffer obscenity in farces nor "base imitations of a nature unworthy to be presented to the eyes of honest people." It is through habit and for the pleasure of the ear that he advises or accepts ths use of the verse in tragedy, without imposing it on comedy or popular drama. As for rhyme, no one should be a slave to it but let the ear guide him. True talents would know how to respect its usage and to modify or advance it as need be, without submitting to its tyranny.

Marmontel's critical tone throughout is that of tolerant reasoning. There is no parody or mockery, no irony or satire. He did not consider himself a good judge of everything, but in most cases, he was a critic in advance of his age.

Since Marmontel believed, as has been mentioned, that art must have a moral purpose, there is no phase of his work that escapes it. His poetry, tragedies, operas, short stories and novels, all point to the moralist and philosopher. Marmontel has a tendency to paint people in softened and kindly colors just as he believed any art should do.

> "All men can not be great but they can be good."[8]

[8]Marmontel, Moral Tales.

It is Marmontel's purpose to help men to that goal by instructing and moralizing. What a simple and sane principle he advocates in "L'Amitié à l'épreuve":

> "The law that God has engraved in our souls to do all the good we can to men and to avoid harming them is sufficient to observe."

In "Le Misanthrope corrigé,"[9] Marmontel's idea of life by experience is summed up as follows:

> "Take my advice, my friend, be a man and live with mankind. It is the intention of nature. She has given faults to us all, that nobody may be dispensed from being indulgent to the faults of others."

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[9] Moral Tales.

MARMONTEL'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE PHILOSOPHERS AND HIS CONTRIBUTION

III

MARMONTEL'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE PHILOSOPHERS AND HIS CONTRIBUTION

> "Philosophers in the eighteenth century are first, all writers who, rarely in metaphysics, more often in morals, in politics, in science and in general, on all matters of speculation, have produced a frank and determined work of independent thought; then next, all those who have associated themselves, through their writings or through their acts, with the claims, the defense, with the struggles of the philosophers properly so-called."[1]

By this statement, Brunel definitely establishes Marmontel as one of the philosophers of the eighteenth century.

In the eighteenth century, philosophy comprised all that was eminent in French letters and one of the most important literary productions was that of the Encyclopedia, which grouped around it collaborators of every order. Although the principal editor of the Encyclopedia was Diderot, the soul and mouthpiece of eighteenth century philosophy, Voltaire, one of the greatest intellectual energies in all history, was the voice of the Encyclopedia. It is Voltaire, who, according to Victor Hugo, characterized the whole eighteenth century.

Within this fraternity of Encyclopedists are found also d'Alembert, the precisian and mathematician, co-editor with Diderot of the Encyclopedia; Grimm, one of the shrewdest in

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[1] Brunel, Les Philosophes de l'Académie, Preface.

the group; Rousseau, the emotional dreamer; Condorcet, a follower of Voltaire and a believer in human perfectibility through emancipation from priests and rulers; d'Holbach, exponent of Naturalism and Fatalism; Helvetius, advocate of the individualistic and utilitarian theory; Buffon, the forerunner of evolutionary ideas; Condillac, the apostle of Sensationalism. Then there is Haller, prince of the physiologists; Morellet, the theologian; Duclos, contributor of shrewd and intelligent reflections on conduct; Turgot, who contributed the important discussion on Endowments. In this distinguished group, Marmontel, who colored people and things with his cheerful optimism, holds an important place.

The spirit of the Encyclopedic or philosophic movement was insurrection; insurrection against the old organization and against the old doctrine, which had proved itself so flagrantly incompetent.

> "Human nature was good, the world was capable of being made a desirable abiding place, the evil of the world was only the fruit of bad education and bad institutions."[2]

Then, institutions must be done away with and education improved; and so the philosophers set out with three purposes: to denounce the abuses of the régime; to make war on the authority of the Church; to proclaim their faith in progress. Each one in the movement tried either by the knowledge he contributed or by his own theory that he had evolved, to

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[2] Morley, Diderot and the Encyclopedists, Preliminary, p. 6.

offer it as the basis for a more workable solution of living.

The theories of Holbach and Helvetius particularly offered substitutes for existing conditions. Holbach pointed out the superiority of Naturalism over Theism as a basis for the most wholesome morality. Helvetius showed that sociology was the foundation of morality rather than theology. Marmontel, in his "Memoirs" describes their homes as the meeting-places for philosophers and mentions particularly Holbach whose hospitality won for him the nickname of "maître d'hôtel" of philosophy.

Of Diderot, Marmontel speaks so often and with such eloquence that it is clearly evident that he was one of his most intimate friends. Diderot believed that man would never be free until both kings and priests were strangled, since one was bound up in the other. He offered no substitute for religion for he was no atheist, but his attitude was that of a sceptic and he insisted that religion and whatever was truth and what was good must submit to the ultimate tests of Intellect and Reason. According to Marmontel, no one can come to know the real Diderot through his writings, but only through hearing his eloquence, feeling his charm and engaging simplicity, and seeing his face which portrayed such absolute goodness of heart.

It is in a different tone that Marmontel speaks of Rousseau. Between him and Rousseau there existed neither

affection nor aversion but coldness. The Encyclopedists had at first been charmed with Rousseau, but his melancholy and vindictive vanity, his fancied injuries, his distrustful and unforgiving nature, his calumnies against them changed their sympathies. Rousseau's beliefs too were so fundamentally divergent that they estranged him from the Encyclopedists. Rousseau had little faith in reason but relied instead on the instinct and sentiment of brotherhood to reunite the social elements. Thus he clashed with his age rather than reflected it. It was not long before Rousseau, having repulsed all friendships, separated from the philosophic group and no longer frequented their meetings.

Marmontel was not the type of person who would be converted to the beliefs held by the radical philosophers. He enjoyed the animated debates and brilliant discussions in a "society of men whose intellects infused warmth and light" into his, but their only effect seems to have been to render him more tolerant towards the views held by other people.

Among the most famous of the numerous salons that Marmontel mentions as gathering places for the exchange of ideas were those of Mme. Geoffrin, Mme. du Deffand, Mlle. de Lespinasse and Mme. d'Epinay. As Voltaire's pupil and friend, Marmontel, with his amiable, sociable qualities, soon found himself a frequenter of these salons and a part of the

philosophic discussions. He was asked to write articles for the Encyclopedia which he undertook when he was at Versailles in 1753-1758. His ambition always was to be on a good footing with two camps, philosophers as well as others. But in 1758 when he accepted the editorship of the "Mercure" and commenced upon his career of letters, he allied himself definitely with the philosophers, undoubtedly rather by calculation and because he was carried along with them than through complete reflection of their ideas. His subsequent election to the Academy and his "Belisarius" linked him closely to them and through association with them, the principles which he represented found an opportunity to arouse particularly strong emotions at the time.

The Encyclopedists, as Morley says, were the most ardent propagators of the modern principle of tolerance. Article upon article was written on this subject and every page of the Encyclopedia was an indirect plea for toleration. But who would call Voltaire tolerant in the bitter anti-clericalism voiced in his "Ecrasez l'infâme!" i.e. the abuses of the Church, a bitterness due to the persecutions and enforced exiles which he had to endure. His "Treatise on Toleration" was followed by a mass of propaganda. The general chorus of the Encyclopedists: "Enlighten and despise the human race! Advance, with a sneer, brethren, in the path of Truth!" can hardly be called tolerant. The articles written were

strong and trenchant invectives with no tolerant attitude toward existing conditions. Their plea for the liberty of the press was upheld only when it voiced their own opinions.

Marmontel alone, stands out among them. He was the true apostle of tolerance. "A philosopher, without being irreligious, he preached tolerance with conviction without falling himself into intolerance."[3] Circumstances and the habits of life that circumstances necessitate have a great influence on the character and views toward life. No doubt Marmontel's family background, his sane and wholesome upbringing, the atmosphere of love and helpfulness in the home, absence of bitterness, influenced his philosophy of life. Added to that was a nature inherently cheerful and optimistic, due in great measure, to his fine health. Quoting Petit de Julleville:

> "The imperturbable good humor characteristic of a man who could digest so well."

The account of Marmontel's life is one example after another of his tolerant and conciliatory nature: the criticisms of his enemies which he disdains to answer; the impartial tone of the "Mercure" and its absence of all personal satire; his efforts to bring about a union of feeling within the Academy. The speech which he made upon his election to the Academy was a plea for the union of men of letters and called attention to the "happy progress of reason which enlightens men and makes them feel better the need of loving

[3] Lenal, Un Homme de lettres au 18e Siècle, p. 558.

one another." His subsequent skillful mediation in the Academy; his attempt at a reconciliation between the Gluckists and the Piccinnists; the part of conciliator in the quarrel between the authors and the comedians of the king; the equal balance which he holds between the ancients and the moderns in his "Elements of Literature"; the "juste milieu" in political and religious opinions; his belief that the Revolution could be avoided and his prudent and dignified behavior during the Revolution; his discourse on the "Free Exercise of the Cults," a plea for Catholicism. At no time had Marmontel attached the Church, but only its abuses, privileges and crushing despotism of conscience. To demand tolerance, to scourge fanaticism was not to act impiously, but affirm the rights of human reason. Such was his philosophy.

But with all his conciliatory nature, Marmontel was far from weak. He was shrewd in succeeding in getting what he wanted for his own good. He was truthful, sincere and full of good sense. He held to his convictions throughout his life and retracted nothing from the principles of his philosophy. Not even his old age weakened the courage to say no to evil when he faced it, as is evinced when he cast the only vote <u>for</u> the suppression of Mirabeau's "Journal" after his election to the States General.

To say that the cause of the Encyclopedists has been

fought and won would scarcely be true. To be sure, the abuses of the Church and State that existed have been remedied and every social improvement since has been the outcome of the Encyclopedic doctrine in one form or another. But "materialistic solution in the science of man, humanitarian ends in legislation, naturalism in art, active faith in the improvableness of institutions"[4]--all these are problems that will continue endlessly to occupy man's energy.

The principles which Marmontel folllowed in his life have caused them to be ignored mainly because of their moderation. Any theory or viewpoint, to make itself heard, to arouse people and to be remembered, must be extreme enough and advocated by equally extreme and violent propaganda. One can no more force people to accept the principles of tolerance through violence than the principles of pacifism through war.

The ideal of tolerance is as far distant now as it was when Marmontel was living. Intolerance continues to progress: intolerance among individuals, intolerance among nations. The modern world is impregnated with the spirit of Belisarius. Most people believe in it and preach it but there are too few who can, like Marmontel, both practice and preach it, surely the finest and most difficult example to follow.

Individuals who like Marmontel, can entertain "sentiments

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[4] Morley, Diderot & the Encyclopedists, p. 9.

of universal kindliness which make one see man and things from the most comforting side"[5] have adopted a commonplace philosophy but one which goes far towards making life tolerable not only to oneself but tolerable to others.

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5 Marmontel, Le Misanthrope corrigé.

CLASSIFIED APPENDIX

OF THE WRITINGS OF MARMONTEL

IV

CLASSIFIED APPENDIX

OF THE WRITINGS OF MARMONTEL

The following is an appendix consisting of Marmontel's works. They have been classified under six headings and arranged chronologically according to the year of writing and publication.

I WORK WRITTEN FOR THE ACADEMIES.

i. **Academy of the Floral Games.**

1. Marmontel's first youthful contribution to the Jeux Floraux was an "Ode sur le poudre à canon" in 1743, which did not even win an honorable mention, much to Marmontel's disappointment.
2. L'Eglogue. An idyll which won for him the prize of pastoral poetry in 1744.
3. "Philis." The same prize of pastoral poetry in 1745.
4. "Jonction des mers par Hercule." Prize of epic poetry in 1745.
5. "L'Incarnation du verbe." The prize reserved for prose in 1745.
6. "L'Origine du fard." The second prize in 1745.
7. "Ode sur la chasse." Prize of the ode in 1749.

ii. French Academy.

1. "La Gloire de Louis XIV perpetuée dans le Roi, son successeur." A prosaic and trite poem which won for him the prize in 1746.
2. "La Clémence de Louis XIV est une des vertus de son auguste successeur."
   An ode inferior, if that be possible, to the poem of the preceding year. It won the prize in 1747.
3. "Les Honneurs accordés au mérite militaire par Louis XIV et augmentés par Louis XV--1751.
4. "La Magnificence et la sûreté des chemins sous Louis XIV et Louis XV--1752."
5. "Epître aux poètes or Les Charmes de l'étude."
   In this poem which won for him the prize in 1760 Marmontel extols Lucan and Le Tasse, disparages Vergil and Boileau and shows himself very little orthodox in literature.
6. "Sur la force et la faiblesse de l'esprit humain."
   A poem read on the same day as his reception to the Academy--December 22, 1763. Marmontel's epicurianism and his optimism show themselves unreservedly. He cannot believe but that sorrow is a blessing nor does he think that "a good God can punish man for having enjoyed

life and made use of the gifts bestowed on him."

7. "Discours en faveur des paysans du nord."
Probably read to the Academy but not published. It was sent to the Economic Society of St. Petersburg in 1767 in reply to the question, "Is it an advantage to the State for the peasant to possess his own land?" Marmontel speaks out clearly for the suppression of slavery and for the restitution of the land to the people.

8. "Sur l'éloquence."
A poem read in the public assembly February 29, 1776, on the day of the reception of the archbishop of Aix.

9. "Sur l'histoire."
Read in the assembly of the French Academy 1778, on the reception of the abbé Millot. Marmontel spoke of his own plans as historiographer, his responsibilities and asked the new king to check the abuses and especially to practice economy.

10. "Sur l'espérance de se survivre."
Read March 4, 1779, at the reception of M. Ducis. The eulogy of Voltaire again reappears in this poem.

11. "De l'autorité et de l'usage de la langue."
Read during his office as secretary, June 16, 1785 at the reception of his friend Morellet. It is contained in the "Encyclopédie Méthodique."

12. "Etudes relatives à l'éloquence."
Both this and the former are contained in the "Encyclopédie Méthodique." Read August 25, 1785, at a public meeting of the Academy.

13. "Essai sur le goût."
Read April 27, 1786, at the reception of Sedaine in which he states that the rules of taste are not "infallible enough to have the right to control genius." Included in the "Eléments de littérature."

14. "L'Éloge de M. d'Alembert."
A prize was offered in 1783 by the Marquis Condorcet on the subject mentioned. In 1786, for lack of competitors, Marmontel took this opportunity to show to would-be competitors the procedure, while at the same time he paid tribute to his friend and his philosophy.

15. "Essai sur le bonheur."
Read in 1787. "Man," says Marmontel, "has been born to be happy and good." He believes that the system of civil, political and moral optimism can be rooted in principles.

16. "Sur la mort du Prince Léopold de Brunswick."
A poem read in the Academy 1788 at the reception of M. d'Aguesseau, Councillor of State. The prize offered for the poem by Count d'Artois had finally been awarded that year.

17. "Apologie de l'Académie française"--1792.

II. WORKS RELATIVE TO THE THEATRE.

i. Tragedy

1. "Denys le tyran."
A tragedy in five acts and in verse. It was Marmontel's first tragedy and hence dedicated to Voltaire. It played first in 1748 with a tremendous success.

2. "Aristomène."
A tragedy in five acts and in verse, dedicated to the Marechal de Richelieu. It was produced in 1749 with much success.

3. "Cléopâtre."
A tragedy in five acts and in verse, based on a Cleopatra not historically true. It was produced in 1750 with little success. It was repeated in 1784 but failed again.

4. "Les Héraclides."
A tragedy in five acts and in verse. The

subject is taken from the Greek poet, Euripides. The subject is badly chosen and feebly written. It was produced in 1752 with less success than "Cléopâtre."

5. "Egyptus."

The subject is that of the funeral of Sesostris, drawn from imagination. A complete failure in 1753.

6. "Numitor."

A strongly romantic play, capable of exciting curiosity. It was unquestionably the best of Marmontel's plays. It was written in 1753, but never produced.

ii. Comic Opera.

Marmontel believed that music and poetry were related and sought to reconcile the two. Since music is a universal language, which expresses and paints as does art, French music could be composed on French verses equal to the Italian. Marmontel in collaboration with Guétry helped to transform comic opera by introducing more variety as duets, ariettas and necessary recitative.

1. "Le Huron."

A comedy in two acts and in free verse inter-

spersed with ariettas. It was drawn from "L'Ingénu" of Voltaire and was played successfully in 1768.

2. "Lucille."

A comedy in one act and in free verse, interspersed with ariettas. Produced in 1769.

3. "Silvain."

A comedy in one act, free verse, with ariettas. It was drawn from Gessner's pastoral, "Eraste," and produced in 1770.

4. "L'Ami de la maison."

A comedy in three acts and in free verse with ariettas. Produced in 1771.

5. "Zémaire et Azor."

Based on the "Beauty and the Beast." A comedy ballet in four acts, free verse, with songs and dances. Produced in 1771.

6. "La Fausse Magie."

A comedy in two acts and in free verse with singing. Produced in 1775. These different comedies were played at the Italian Comedy, where they had fair success.

iii. Pastorals, Ballets and Lyric Tragedies.

1. "Acanthe et Céphise or La Sympathie."

A heroic pastoral composed for Rameau on the

occasion of the birth of Mgr. the Duke of Bourgogne in 1751. It contained three acts in free verse.

2. "La Guirlande or Les fleurs enchantées."
   A ballet act in free verse in 1751. Music by Rameau.
3. "Lysis et Délie."
   A pastoral in one act and in free verse. Produced with Rameau in 1753.
4. "Les Sibarites."
   A ballet act in free verse added to the opera of "Surprises de l'amour." Produced in 1753 with music by Rameau.
5. "Hercule mourant."
   A lyric tragedy in five acts and in free verse. Played in 1761. Music by d'Auvergne.
6. "Annette et Lubin."
   A pastoral in one act in free verse. Music by La Borde. Played in 1762.
7. "La Bergère des Alpes."
   A pastoral in three acts and in free verse, interspersed with songs, the music of which was furnished by Kohaut. It was produced first at the Italian Comedy in 1766.

8. "Céphale et Procris or L'Amour conjugal."

A lyric tragedy in three acts and in free verse. The music was furnished by Guétry. It was first played at Versailles in 1773 where the Court found the music rather pretty but resembling too much the comic opera. It was a complete failure when played in 1777 before the public who had meanwhile heard Gluck's l'Orphée."

9. "Didon."

A lyric tragedy in three acts and in verse. Marmontel believed that he had found in the new musician, Piccinni, a man to realize his designs of composing Italian music on French verses. Marmontel borrowed the subject from the Dido of Metastase and Le Franc, simplifying it and reducing it to the customary proportion of French opera. It has the merit of rapidity and the ending is truly tragic. It was played with great success at Court in 1783 and as successfully in Paris.

10. "Le Dormeur éveillé."

A lyric tragedy immediately following "Didon" in 1783. It was coldly received at Paris.

11. "Pénélope."

A lyric tragedy in three acts and free verse played in 1785. Grimm says that, "All the talent of Piccinni has not been able to sustain the interest in a subject so contrary to morals as to almost render it ridiculous--namely, that of the love of a lady of forty years for a husband absent for twenty years." Marmontel should have then terminated his lyric career with "Didon."

12. "Démophon."

13. "Antigone."

Both are lyric tragedies in three acts and free verse, produced in 1788 and 1790 respectively. They were too trite subjects and had no success.

14. "Le Cigisbé or le Fat corrigé."

One of the most feeble of Marmontel's comic operas, the date of which is unknown. It was produced after his death in 1804. The music is by Louis Piccinni, son of the great Piccinni, and consisted of two acts in verse.

iv. Miscellaneous Works.

1. "Le Venceslas" -- 1759.

A play by Rotrou which Marmontel, at Mme.

Pompadour's suggestion, revived and changed so as to adapt it to the stage of the eighteenth century. But his efforts to blend the archaic language of Rotrou with the colorless and abstract language of the eighteenth century theatre resulted in a mélange which rendered Rotrou's play unrecognizable. Fréron, with his criticisms, and Le Kain, who in his acting, substituted the original version of Rotrou, fomented a quarrel which ended in a triumph for Fréron, and the "Venceslas" was dropped.

2. "Roland."

A lyric tragedy of Quinault in three acts. Marmontel revised the poem to adapt it to the new art of Piccinni who furnished the music. Librettist and musician thus worked together to fuse French words and Italian music. Marmontel had the intention of remodeling other poems as well of Quinault but was stopped by the refusal of the Director of the Opera to pay him for works that were not his own. The success of Roland in 1776 was great but it unchained the hatreds against Marmontel and the war between the two rival schools of music, Gluck and Piccinni.

3. "Chefs d'oeuvre dramatiques or Récueil des meilleures pieces du Theâtre-Français, tragique, comique et lyrique." 1773. The volume contains some preliminary discussion on the language and the taste. It was suspended after the publication of the first volume.

III. HISTORY.

1. "Cléopâtre d'après l'histoire." 1750.
Before risking his play, "Cléopâtre," on the stage, Marmontel published a pamphlet, introducing his heroine as she was to be painted on the stage. Marmontel to the contrary,--his Cleopatra is neither drawn from Suetonius nor Plutarch, and the public refused to accept Marmontel's historical interpretation.

2. "Essai sur les révolutions de la musique in France." 1777.
Published during the quarrel between the two rival schools of music, that of Gluck and that of Piccinni. Marmontel attacks Gluck, preaches reconciliation, and at the same time defends the cause of Piccinni.

3. "Mémoires d'un père pour servir à l'instruction de ses enfants."
Published posthumously in 1805. This is Marmontel's

most famous work. Marmontel is an excellent portrait painter of society and his "Mémoires" form a picture gallery in which Marmontel has portrayed his contemporaries, as well as himself, sometimes maliciously, but more often with indulgence. It is written in a tone of optimism which makes delightful reading.

4. "Régence du duc d'Orléans."
   Published posthumously in 1805. Marmontel took his duty as historiographer seriously and he occupied himself from 1784--1788 in writing a complete historical account of the Regency. It is written in a noble and serious style.
5. "Les Premiers Jours des Etats Généraux."
   An account of the events of May--June, 1789.
6. "La Prise de la Bastille."
   The description of July 14, 1789.

IV. NOVELS.

1. Contes moraux, anciens et mouveaux.
   There are forty tales in all.
   A. Contes moraux anciens.
      The following twenty-three are included in the Contes Moraux Anciens, 1755-1766.

1. "Le Moi."

   An old story. A satire on the selfishness of women.

2. "Soliman II."

   A Turkish story.

3. "Le Scrupule or L'Amour mécontent."

   Very French and very characteristic of the eighteenth century.

4. "Tout ou rien."

   A modern tale, introducing the new element of tragedy of the eternal contrast of two lovers.

5. "Les Quatre Flocons or Aleidonis."

   A mixture of Greek customs and those of the eighteenth century.

6. "Les Deux Infortunées."

   A moral, dramatic tale.

7. "Heureusement."

   A French tale, one of the best.

8. "Lausus et Lydie."

   An old story, one of two having nothing of the eighteenth century. It paints the sentiments of nature.

9. "Le Philosophe soi-disant."

   A modern tale that distinguishes true from false philosophy. Probably a hit at

Rousseau.

10. "L'Heureux Divorce."

This story anticipates the "amantium irae" of later French stories, so common after the institution of divorce.

11. "La Bergère des Alpes."

A modern, romantic tale, having all the defects of Sensibility. Intensely unpractical and sentimental.

12. "La Mauvaise Mère."

13. "La Bonne Mère."

Both are moral tales of average merit.

14. "Annette et Lubin."

A true tale, one of the most original and best told.

15. "Les Mariages samnites."

A story similar to No. 8.

16. "L'École des pères."

The reforming morality of the time and its belief in perfectibility by moral influence ~~than~~ are illustrated. Like No. 16.

17. "Le Connaisseur."

A portrait of a man more erudite than enlightened. Like No. 16.

18. "Le Bon Mari."

A story similar to No. 16.

19. "Le Mari sylphe."

A tale where the ephemeral element by no means excludes the universal and permanent.

20. "Laurette."

A story to excite dramatic emotions.

21. "La Femme comme il y en a peu."

Really a very feeble creature.

22. "L'Amitié à l'épreuve."

A prelude to Belisaire.

23. "Le Misanthrope corrigé."

B. Contes Moraux nouveaux.

The following seventeen are included in the "Contes moreaux mouveaux"written between 1790--1795.

1. "Le Veillée."
2. "Le Franc Breton."
3. "Les Déjeunés du village or Les Aventures de l'innocence."
4. "La Leçon du malheur."
5. "L'Erreur d'un bon père."
6. "Palémon."

   A pastoral tale.
7. "Les Solitaires de Murcie.
8. "L'Ecole de l'amitié."

9. "Le Trépied d'Hélène."

10. "Il le faillait."

11. "Les Bateliers de Besons."

12. "Les Rivaux d'eux-mêmes.

13. "La Cassette."

14. "Les Souvenirs du coin du feu."

15. "La Côte des deux amants.

16. "Le petit Voyage."

17. "Promenades de Platon en Sicile."

2. Bélisaire--1767.

It was the fifteenth chapter on religious tolerance which practically caused the book to be censored by the theologians of the Sorbonne.

3. Les Incas or La Destruction de l'empire du Perou--1777.

A novel dedicated to the King of Sweden, King Gustavus III.

V. POETRY.

1. "Ode sur la bataille de Fontenoy," 1745.

Prosaic and banal. Based on Voltaire's "Bataille de Fontenoy."

2. "La Boucle de cheveux enlevée," 1746.

A translation of Pope's comic heroic poem--"The Rape of the Lock."

3. "Une Épitre au roi sur l'edit pour la noblesse militaire," 1750.

4. "L'Établissement de l'école royale militaire," 1751.

   A heroic poem composed in honor of the king. Mediocre and full of banal allegories.

5. "Vers sur la maladie et la convalescence de Mgr. le Dauphin," 1752. A flattery which brought him no returns.

6. "Vers sur la naissance de Mgr. le duc d'Aquitaine," 1753.

7. "Epître à son excellence M. l'abbé comte de Bernis," 1756.

   A poem composed to "celebrate the advantages of that great and happy alliance" of the treaty of Versailles. One of the best of the"poèmes des circonstances" that Marmontel had done.

8. "Ode contre l'égoisme d'une fausse philosophie," 1756.

9. "Vers au fils de M. la Comtesse de C," 1758.

10. "Vers à Madame," 1758.

11. "Le Miroir de Vénus," 1759.

12. "Le Songe véridigue," 1759.

13. "Un Disciple de Socrate aux Athéniens," 1760.

An anonymous heroic poem attributed to Marmontel in which he voices his belief that there is no eternal punishment.

14. "La Neuvaine de Cythère," 1765.
Marmontel gives too free a rein to his sensuality in this poem. It was not meant for publication but was published posthumously in his "Mémoires sécrets" in 1820.

15. "La Pharsale de Lucain," 1766.
A translation which although agreeable, rendered poor service to Lucan.

16. "Epître à Mlle. Guimard," 1768.

17. "La Voix des pauvres. Epîtres sur l'incendie de l'Hôtel-Dieu," 1772.
Marmontel appeals to the kindness and reason of the king and also of the public to prevent the rebuilding of l'Hotel-Dieu under the same unhealthy conditions and to provide instead "an open space where the sick can breathe."

18. "L'Ode à la louange de Voltaire," 1772.
A homage of his gratitude to Voltaire. The poem was read by Mlle. Clarion at the unveiling of a bust of Voltaire.

19. "Vous avez tort," 1779.
Advice given to "gens de lettres."

20. "Polymnie"-1780.

A satiric poem relating the complete story of the quarrel between the Gluckists and the Piccinnists. At first suppressed on the demand of Marmontel's son, it was afterwards published posthumously in 1818.

The following list contains undated poems of minor importance.

"Trésor du Parnasse."

"L'Élite des poésies fugitives."

"Daphné."

"Pétrarque."

"La Bergère des Alpes."

"Vers inités d'une idylle de Kleit, poète allemand."

"Epithalmie pour le mariage de Mlle D.L.S."

"Chanson pour Mme. Marmontel."

"Chanson pour M. L'abbé M."

"Chanson pour M. L'abbé de M."

"La Ceinture de Vénus."

"Vers à M.B."

"Epithaphe du Maréchale de Saxe."

"L'Amour Vengé."

"Reponse à une épigramme de Pirou contre Bélisaire."

"Vers écrits du château de L.T."

"Vers sur Mesdemoiselles l'Escajeul."

"Chansons"-6 in number.

"Paroles d'un duo de la garde."

"Agar et Ismael, drame lyrique."

VI. MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.

1. L'Observateur littéraire, 1746.

   A weekly literary journal published jointly with Vauvenargues and Bauvin. It appeared without the name of the author and the name of the publisher since it was published at Clousier's, rue Saint Jacques, in secret, the authors being too poor to pay the three hundred francs required by the Journal des savants of every new literary magazine.

2. Preface to the Henriade, 1746.

   The critic which appears in the articles of the Encyclopedia has his beginning here. His praise of Voltaire's Henriade is reserved, probably both because he fears to antagonize the critics of the day and out of respect for Voltaire.

3. Various criticisms published in the "Mercure de France" of which he was director in 1748.

   Marmontel abstains from all irony, parody and mockery which he says "enlightens no one" and uses

instead a moderate tone of reasoning. He invites other contributors to imitate him and to abstain from all personal satire in defense or attack.

4. Réponse à la lettre sur les Spectacles, 1759.
   Marmontel's reply to the letter addressed to M. d'Alembert, of l'Académie des Sciences, by M.J.J.Rousseau on d'Alembert's article, "Genève" in the seventh volume of "l'Encyclopédie." The fact that Marmontel does not wish to wound the feelings of his fellow authors makes it weak in comparison with La Harpe's brutal criticism and d'Alembert's courageous criticism in "l'Essai sur les gens de lettres."
5. Poétique française-1763.
   This is taken from the "Encyclopédie."
6. Pièces relatives à Bélisaire--1767.
7. "Eléments de littérature"--1787.
   . An excellent text book on rhetoric, the result of more than thirty years of labor, most articles of which were taken from the "Encyclopédie." A discussion of various topics on literature arranged in alphabetical order.
8. "L'Encyclopédie Méthodique" or "Dictionnaire de grammaire et de littérature"--1782--1786.

This work contains extracts from the Encyclopedia. Besides the grammar and literature which, as the title indicates that it contains, there is a Supplement which is a dictionary of words.

The plan of the "Méthodique" or "Dictionnaire" is as follows:

I. The Art of Language.

1. Grammar.

A. General grammar.

B. Idiomatic grammar.

2. Literature.

A. Poetry.

B. Rhetoric.

C. Criticism.

The first part was not written by Marmontel, but by Marfais and continued by Beauzée.

The second part is Marmontel's work. Marmontel displays a profound knowledge of literature and a sound taste combined with a solid and clear discussion, a clear, correct and elegant style and a choice of happy and agreeable examples.

9. "Rapports sur les depôts littéraire"--1797.

10. "Discours sur le libre exercise des cultes" 1797.

11. "Leçons d'un père à ses enfants" 1805. A posthumous publication written after 1796. Panckoucke asked Marmontel to reprint some old works and write some new ones. There was a question of six subjects: Grammar, Poetry, Rhetoric, Logic, Metaphysics and Moral. The Poetry and the Rhetoric, which he could draw from his "Elements of Litterature," were not undertaken. The Grammar he drew from Beauzée which the latter had treated in the "Encyclopédie Méthodique." The three new subjects which he added were: La Logique, La Metaphysique and La Morale.

The latter subjects are interesting because they show us Marmontel's philosophic and religious opinions at the end of his life. Reason falters before faith. The belief in immortality needs to be strengthened by the infallible word of a God. Marmontel then, accepts the dogma of the church and returns to Catholicism.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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